



Elite Education Student Service

SAMPLE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

MBA EXAMPLE ESSAY

Write a candid description of yourself, stressing those personal qualities, assets, and liabilities that you feel will influence your graduate work. Describe what you consider to be your most important professional and / or academic achievement to date.

If one were to ask my friends to describe me they would describe me as a very pleasant, diverse, active and intelligent woman. I think one of my most distinguishing characteristics is the diversity of experiences I possess. I am a science student with a flair for the arts. I am a woman with technical aptitude and an interest in management. I also have a passion for traveling and understanding different cultures of the world. All these elements have given me a very broad outlook, with varying degrees of knowledge in a range of topics. I strongly believe that although some are not related directly, all these qualities will influence my graduate work.

My Engineering degree has given a strong foundation to my analytical skills since civil designing involves a lot of long, complex and intricate calculations and the application of basic math skills. Over the past four years, I have been working part-time with my family firm, SnMTech Systems. I am also the co-founder and active member with FOE - Friends of the Environment. I have assisted in the installation of Enterprise-wide Resource Planning (ERP) System at Blotech, a major Engineering Company. More than what I have studied in school and college, it has been these experiences that have shaped the person that I am today.

I believe that this unique blend of experiences has made me a woman with an original point of view. This blend has given me a broader perspective to and a good understanding of life and a goal to aim for. Among other things, I have this diversity of experience to offer Utah University. My most substantial accomplishment has been the success of the software upgradation project that I managed at SnMTech Systems Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, where I have been working as a part time Associate Intern - Management Information Systems since 1994.

During the first two years of my work at SnMTech, I had an opportunity to observe and work with the existing system being used. Some of the software packages being used were outdated versions. I have always been in touch with the latest software packages thanks to the powerful PC I have at home and am quite used to working with a Graphical User Interface (GUI) environment. At the office, there was great deal of chaos while preparing reports that involved use of more than one software since compatibility between packages usually posed a problem. The difficulty we faced putting different files together led to the final report appearing rather haphazard sometimes.

I believe in providing and maintaining non-negotiable high standards and service. I recognized that shifting to a newer GUI based software would not only dramatically improve our documentation quality, but also increase productivity at the workplace. Presenting the pros and cons to the management of the upgradation was a very challenging task. I was asked to prepare a proposal regarding the upgradation of the firm's software. Initially, I imagined this project would be rather simple but it turned out to be among the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life.

Through a firm-wide survey of operators and several one-on-one discussions of their own preferences and solutions, I found that while everybody wanted an upgradation, they had doubts since they would have to learn a whole set of new skills. In order to prepare a budget, I procured quotations from various vendors and analyzed possible combinations. I realized the necessity of a training course for the operators because most of them were not familiar with the GUI interface. I examined the various training classes that offered private in-house training for the employees. After a detailed analysis, I presented my report to the management in the next meeting. They were pleased with my efforts and pleasantly surprised



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at the cost of the project since it seemed to be comparatively less than what they had anticipated.

Once I was given the go-ahead, the next hurdle was to implement the proposal and coordinate the upgrading. To avoid any disturbance to the company's work, training sessions were planned after working hours. The upgrading took a week and the training of the operators took another two weeks. The really tough period started once the training personnel left. The management felt that it was my responsibility to see that the operators didn't face any problems once they actually started using the new software packages. I put in 60 to 70-hour weeks for the next three weeks before everyone was comfortable with the new system. While the benefits of using these packages were not immediately tangible, a few months later our clients acknowledged that the quality of the reports we sent them had improved considerably. In fact, a year later our firm decided to upgrade all of its software packages. I consider this to be a tacit compliment for my efforts.

This project required me to believe in myself and in what I thought was good for the company. I had to take a pro-active approach, take the initiative and play a leadership role in motivating people and executing the project to completion. A good manager is one who can figure out where the problem lies, deal with it effectively by involving all the members of the company and improve the overall culture of the company. The problem I saw at SnMTech had to be resolved to sustain the company's image. The fact that I was able to pull off this task alone has boosted my confidence in my abilities.

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Paragraph 1

A good introductory paragraph. This summarizes the next couple of paragraphs and also has a certain intriguing appeal - it arouses the reader's curiosity and impels him to read further. The first sentence, however, could easily have been dropped - the second sentence would make a more compelling introduction to the essay.

Paragraph 2

Here the writer develops on the thread of diversity. Note that there is an emphasis on aspects that are important to an MBA course (strong analytical skills, math skills, work experience). The writer shows effectively that she has not been 'wasting her time' - besides earning a degree, she has earned valuable work experience and done something for the environment. Volunteer work is a strong advantage while applying to an MBA course - universities love people with a social conscience! (To a lesser degree, this is true if you're applying to other graduate courses as well, as long as you show that your primary interest, now and in the future, is in the field you are applying to). At the same time, it is important that this experience appears genuine - so before making tall claims, make sure that you can substantiate them, preferably by actually doing some volunteer / social work. The last sentence ties the paragraph together. The argument 'my experiences have shaped me' is invaluable IF you have strong or unusual life experiences and in some cases can also partially compensate for an average or below-average academic record.

Paragraph 3

We come to a shift in focus with this paragraph. The writer wraps up the 'diversity' thread well. Saying that she has a diversity of experience to offer, 'among other things', is a good idea - it implies that there is much more to her, qualities and assets that could not be described here because of space limitations. It might have been a better idea to begin the next topic - 'most important achievement' in a new paragraph. The abrupt change of subject has a slightly disconcerting effect here.

Paragraph 4

While this paragraph is ostensibly an introduction to the problem handled by the writer, it also makes two points, subtly -



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- 1) she had been working in the family firm on a continuous basis and kept her eyes open to spot an area of improvement,
- 2) she is familiar with popular software packages and very comfortable with a PC.

Paragraph 5

The first sentence risks sounding slightly pompous, but the writer's earnestness comes through after reading the paragraph as a whole.

Paragraph 6

Comes across as systematic, organized and thorough. Good qualities for any graduate applicant.

Paragraph 7

This paragraph shows considerable maturity and learning from the event. A problem is not solved when you have a solution for it - implementing the solution is usually the biggest hurdle. Also, she realizes that company-wide changes rarely yield instant results, and must be followed up over a period of time to evaluate their effects. The last two sentences show that this project also had an effect on the company management's thinking.

Paragraph 8

Reflective paragraph on what she has gained from the project. She certainly seems to have been the driving force behind the project and it's an impressive achievement. It might have been a good idea, though, to put in a line or two about how she learned to co-ordinate between various entities to get her job done. Good ending paragraph.

Summary

This is a mature, well-written application essay. Some of the ideas here are gold mines for other essays - describing how she founded and helped run FOE could be a whole essay by itself, and can be used to show how she used leadership and team skills (see Essay 5 - coming soon). Her experience in assisting in the implementation of an ERP system can also be used as an example of team skills and project management skills. MBA applicants have to write a number of essays for each school. It helps to have a bank of experiences to draw on. Writing a series of essays also means that you can afford to have a limited scope for each essay, and go a little deeper.

We do feel, however, that this essay was a tad too limited on the 'candid description' of the writer. Diversity of experiences is an excellent point to make, but one more paragraph on other aspects of the writer's personality would have strengthened the essay.

Each application essay should answer the question asked in full. Note, however, that this writer says nothing about any liabilities that might influence graduate work. We have a tricky issue here - must you mention some liabilities just because the question asks for them? Here the writer chooses to ignore them and concentrates on qualities that will be an asset for graduate work. It might have paid off in this case because the essay basically asks, 'How well are you suited for graduate work'. In an essay question of the type, 'Discuss your strengths and weaknesses' such a strategy would not work. Nevertheless, it's a tough choice to make